

**GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA**  
**OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL**  
[oag.dc.gov](http://oag.dc.gov)



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## **Attorney General Racine Launches Effort to Leverage Data and Technology to Improve Public Safety and Juvenile Justice**

*Risk-Screening Instrument, Other Data-Driven Methods Would Assist Prosecutors*

**WASHINGTON, D.C.** – Attorney General Karl A. Racine today announced a new effort in the Office of the Attorney General (OAG) to improve prosecutorial decision-making and more effectively reduce youth crime. The effort would employ modern risk-assessment instruments, data tracking, and analysis to improve public safety and promote fairness and accountability in the delivery of prosecutorial services.

**“The District faces an epidemic of young people getting involved with our juvenile-justice system but not being properly rehabilitated by that system – meaning they end up in a life of crime rather than productive citizenship,”** Attorney General Racine said. **“That’s bad for kids, bad for public safety, and bad for the District’s taxpayers. We have to use data-driven methods to understand what factors are contributing to this epidemic so we can not only treat its symptoms, but also prevent future cases.”**

Modern data analytics make it possible to gauge an offender’s likelihood of engaging in future criminal activity using actuarial science on risk, much like the analytics used by insurance and credit card companies. These risk-assessment instruments can be coupled with needs assessments to pinpoint what kind of rehabilitative or therapeutic services youth need to stay crime-free. Finally, the rehabilitative programming offered delinquent youth must be high-quality and effective at providing the services youth need to get back on track.

OAG, which prosecutes juvenile offenses in the District, is seeking to develop a prosecutorial risk-screening instrument. This instrument, once created and implemented, will better inform prosecutors’ decisions about which juveniles are good candidates for diversion to community-based programs rather than being prosecuted, and which juveniles need special attention by prosecutors and the juvenile-justice system.

The system will track offenders, charged offenses, and case outcomes. The data system will collect critical risk- and needs-assessment information and demographic information. The data will be analyzed on an ongoing basis to ensure that low-risk offenders are held accountable for their actions but do not penetrate too deeply into the juvenile-justice system, since research shows that doing so increases recidivism.

Similarly, OAG will seek to ensure that high-risk offenders are held accountable and receive intensive therapeutic and rehabilitative programming to reduce their likelihood of future criminal involvement.

OAG will also engage in a comprehensive assessment of the quantity, quality, and effectiveness of diversion options and out-of-home placements for youth involved with the District's juvenile-justice system. It will survey existing juvenile-justice programming, and will continue to explore tapping existing non-justice community-based resources for at-risk District youth.

**"The District has many high-quality rehabilitative programs available to help young people who have contact with our justice system and put them on a path towards success," Attorney General Racine said. "As the gateway to our juvenile-justice system, the Office of the Attorney General is committed to using the best science to protect public safety and improve our prosecutors' decision-making."**

OAG is seeking funds to underwrite the juvenile-justice program as part of its Fiscal Year 2016 Budget Proposal, which is currently before the Council of the District of Columbia and scheduled for a hearing on Wednesday, April 29, 2015, before the Council's Committee on the Judiciary.

OAG is also applying for grants to support the juvenile-justice program, including a grant through the U.S. Department of Justice's Smart Prosecution Initiative.

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